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Revenue from Recycled Waste

Afghanistan's second largest city adds a rare and welcomed new source of revenue



Photo: FAF Development

A local entrepreneur purchases a tractor load of the soil separated from the hundreds of thousands of cubic feet of solid waste and debris removed from Kandahar City.

Potentially recyclable items like wood, cloth, plastic, metal, glass, and soil are separated and sold as a source of revenue.

In just over a week, the sale of composted organic waste has raised 20,600 Afghani (\$460) for the Kandahar City municipal government, the first of what is to become a regular 'green' revenue source for the municipality. Nutrient rich soil has been separated from trash being cleaned up as part of a project funded by USAID.

Municipal Waste Department Manager Kamaluddin welcomed the new revenue stream, "This project is important, not only for the revenue, but also because residents of Kandahar City are coming to depend on the provision of these waste management services."

This initiative is part of a larger project focused on cleaning solid waste and debris from within the city. It employs over 1300 laborers and a fleet of trucks to transport more than 15,000 cubic feet of solid waste and debris per day to the municipal dump outside the city. There, potentially recyclable items are separated: wood, cloth, plastic, metal, glass, and soil.

The soil has been popular with local farmers who heard about the sale through word of mouth. One entrepreneur, who purchased several tractor loads, hopes that he can resell it to farmers in more rural districts. The project, in cooperation with the municipality, is actively searching for buyers of the remaining recyclable goods. Not only does the sale of these goods provide a source of revenue for the municipality, but it also reduces the volume of garbage at the dump, opens up additional farmland and contributes to the local economy.

USAID assists governments in urban centers to increase the capacity of municipal officials, improve the delivery of municipal services, support economic growth initiatives, and increase own-source revenues. USAID funds service delivery improvements and small-scale infrastructure projects such as road paving, parks, and solid waste management.